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# Presidential Documents

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Title 3—

Proclamation 7647 of February 7, 2003

The President

## Establishment of the Governors Island National Monument

By the President of the United States of America

### A Proclamation

On the north tip of Governors Island, at the confluence of the Hudson and East Rivers, stand two fortifications that served as an outpost to protect New York City from sea attack. These two important historic objects, Castle Williams and Fort Jay, are part of a National Historic Landmark District designated in 1985. Between 1806 and 1811, these fortifications were constructed as part of the First and Second American Systems of Coastal Fortification. Castle Williams and Fort Jay represent two of the finest examples of defensive structures in use from the Renaissance to the American Civil War. They also played important roles in the War of 1812, the American Civil War, and World Wars I and II.

These fortifications were built on the most strategic defensive positions on the island. Fort Jay, constructed between 1806 and 1809, is on the highest point of the island from which its glacis originally sloped down to the waterfront on all sides. Castle Williams, constructed between 1807 and 1811, occupies a rocky promontory as close as possible to the harbor channels and served as the most important strategic defensive point in the entrance to the New York Harbor.

Governors Island was managed by the United States Army and the United States Coast Guard for nearly 200 years, but is no longer required for defense or Coast Guard purposes. It provides an excellent opportunity for the public to observe and understand the harbor history, its defense, and its ecology. Its proximity to lower Manhattan also makes it an appropriate location from which to reflect upon the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

Section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431) (the “Antiquities Act”), authorizes the President, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

A Governors Island National Monument was established by Proclamation 7402 of January 19, 2001, in order to protect the two fortifications. The monument, however, remained subject to Public Law 105–33, section 9101, 111 Stat. 670 (August 5, 1997), which required the entire island, including the monument lands, to be sold with a right of first offer to the State and City of New York.

WHEREAS the State and City of New York each executed a consent and waiver of the right of first offer regarding Governors Island; and

WHEREAS the portion of Governors Island described on the accompanying land description was sold to the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust), on January 31, 2003, and the remainder of Governors Island was sold to the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC) of the State and City of New York, on January 31, 2003; and